

**DEER HERD UNIT MANAGEMENT PLAN**  
**Deer Herd Unit # 19**  
**(West Desert)**  
**April 2006**

**BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

**Tooele, Utah, Juab and Millard counties** - Boundary begins at the Utah-Nevada state line and I-80 in Wendover; east on I-80 to the Dugway road at Rowley Junction; south on this road to the Pony Express Road; east on this road to SR-36; north on SR-36 to SR-73; east on SR-73 to I-15; south on I-15 to US-6 at Santiquin; southwest on US-6 to its junction with US-50 near Delta; west on US-50 & 6 to the Utah-Nevada state line; north along this state line to I-80 at Wendover.

**LAND OWNERSHIP**

**RANGE AREA AND APPROXIMATE OWNERSHIP**

Ownership	YEARLONG RANGE		SUMMER RANGE		WINTER RANGE	
	Area (acres)	%	Area (acres)	%	Area (acres)	%
Forest Service		0%	48468	22.2%	21282	3.9%
Bureau of Land Management	541579	87.8%	115988	54.8%	412392	75.9%
Utah State Institutional Trust Lands	46914	7.6%	8486	4%	32716	6%
Native American Trust Lands	0	0%	10711	5.1%	9877	1.8%
Private	5776	.9%	27961	13.2%	64159	11.8%
Department of Defense	22299	3.6%	0	0%	2688	.5%
USFWS Refuge	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Bankhead Jones	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Utah State Parks	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Utah Division of Wildlife Resources	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>616568</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>211614</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>543114</b>	<b>100%</b>

**UNIT MANAGEMENT GOALS**

Manage for a population of healthy animals capable of providing a broad range of recreational opportunities, including hunting and viewing. Balance deer herd impacts on human needs, such as private property rights, agricultural crops and local economies. Maintain the population at a level that is within the long-term capability of the available habitat to support.

**POPULATION MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES**

- < Target Winter Herd Size - Achieve a long-term combined target population size of 11,200 wintering deer.

**Unit 19**

Target Objective 2002-2005	11,200
Target Objective 2006-2011	11,200
Change	0

5 year (Short term) Winter Herd Size – Manage for a 5-year target population of 11,200 wintering deer during the five-year planning period unless range conditions become unsuitable, as evaluated by DWR permanent range trend surveys. If winter range is the limiting factor, reduce population objective by 20% on any unit when weighted DCI score falls in to “poor” classification or below. If winter range condition is classified as “fair” or better deer populations will be allowed to expand toward the long-term objective.

Subunit	DCI Score	Fair DCI range for unit 19	Classification	Current Population	Proposed objective 2006-2011
West Desert 19a	49.5	42-57	Fair	6,900 Combined	11,200 Combined
Vernon 19b	50	46-61	Fair		

**Herd Composition**

- < West Desert Mt Range (19a); Maintain a region-wide three year average postseason buck to doe ratio ranging from 15-20:100.
- < Vernon (19b); (limited entry portion of unit 19); Maintain a three year average postseason buck to doe ratio ranging from 25-35:100.
- < Harvest – General Buck Deer hunt regulations, using archery, Rifle, and Muzzleloader hunts apply on the West Desert Mountain Ranges 19a. Limited Entry hunt regulation for Archery, Rifle and Muzzleloader apply to Vernon subunit 19b

**POPULATION MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES****Monitoring**

- < Population Size - Utilizing harvest data, postseason and spring classifications and mortality estimates, a computer model has been developed to estimate winter population size. Because a part of this population is highly migratory in nature, periodic monitoring and counts of deer passing between the Sheeprock/Tintic mountains area and the House Range/Swasey Mountain/Conger Mountain areas will be required. A remote sensing apparatus may be used for this purpose.
- < Buck Age Structure - Monitor age class structure of the buck population through the use of checking stations, postseason classification, uniform harvest surveys and field bag checks.

- < Harvest - The primary means of monitoring harvest will be through the statewide uniform harvest survey. Achieve the target population size by use of antlerless harvest using a variety of harvest methods and seasons. The targeted winter population should result in an expected annual buck harvest of perhaps 800 deer when normal conditions occur, but recognize that buck harvest will be above or below what is expected due to climatic and productivity variables. Buck harvest strategies will be developed through the RAC and Wildlife Board process to achieve management objectives for buck:doe ratios.

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**Limiting Factors (May prevent achieving management objectives)**

- < Crop Depredation - Take all steps necessary to minimize depredation as prescribed by state law and DWR policy.
- < Habitat - Deer numbers in this area are primarily limited by the amount and quality of summer range and water distribution. Preservation and even enhancement of the very limited areas of higher altitude good quality summer range is very important. At present, only the Deep Creek Mountains offer any significant expanse of this type of habitat. Excessive habitat utilization will be addressed.
- < Predation - Refer to DWR predator management policy.
  - Assess need for control by species, geographic area and season of year.
  - Seek assistance from USDA/Wildlife Services when deer populations are depressed and where there is a reasonable chance of gaining some relief through a predator control effort. Predator control efforts will focus on removing predators immediately prior to, and during, the spring fawning period. A predator management plan for the Sheeprock Mountains, which focuses primarily on coyote control for the purpose of enhancing fawn survival, is currently being implemented.
  - Recommend cougar harvest to benefit deer while maintaining the cougar as a valued resource in its own right.
- < Illegal Harvest - Should illegal kill become an identified and significant source of mortality attempt to develop specific preventive measures within the context of an action plan developed in cooperation with the Law Enforcement Section.

**HABITAT MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES**

- < Provide a long-term continuing base of habitat quantity and quality sufficient to support the stated population objectives.

**HABITAT MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES**

- < Continue to monitor the permanent range trend studies located throughout the unit. These are located on both summer and winter range.
- < Continue to restore and improve sagebrush steppe habitats critical to deer according to DWR's Habitat Initiative. Cooperate with federal land management agencies and private landowners in carrying out habitat improvements such as reseeding, controlled burns, water developments etc. on public and private lands.
- < Maintain and/or enhance forage production through direct range improvements throughout the unit to achieve population management objectives.

- < Work with private and federal agencies to maintain and protect critical summer ranges from future losses or degradation. Continue the cooperative effort to develop water sources to enhance deer and other wildlife distribution.

**PERMANENT RANGE TREND SUMMARIES** (Added 2001)

**Unit 19, West Desert/Deep Creek Subunit (2002)**

There are 8 range trend study sites on the deep creek mountain range. Seven are on BLM administered land while one is on Goshute Indian Reservation Land. Four study sites are present on winter ranges in Trail Gulch, Ochre Mountain, Sevy Canyon and Durse Canyon. Three summer range studies Chokecherry, Granite, and the Basin.

There were no upward trends for soil, herbaceous, or browse components in 2002. Soil herbaceous, and browse trends were reported stable on two sites while downward on two others.

Downward trends can be attributed to periods of drought, resulting in increased bare soil, increased decadence, reduced vigor, decline in reproduction and a decline in overall forbs.

**Unit 19, West Desert/Vernon Subunit (2002)**

The Vernon subunit has 9 trend sites of which 8 were read in 1997. Five sites are summer range and three are winter range. The South Pine Canyon transect was not read due to fire not leaving any browse species. In the summer of 1996 over 14,000 acres burned in much of the summer range. The Vernon was closed to deer hunting in 1997 and reopened in 2000.

In 2002 range trends were largely driven by 3 years of drought conditions. In combination with drought, mormon cricket use resulted in lower abundance of herbaceous and primary forbs.

Nine of twelve Browse sites showed stable trends, while only three sites had downward trends. Gentle slopes with vegetation and litter cover help keep erosion to a minimum. Herbaceous under-story appears to be stable on most sites but has declined on burned areas. In 1998 the Forest Service burned stands of thick juniper in the West Government Creek area in an effort to improve site conditions.

**Duration of Plan**

This unit management plan was approved by the Wildlife Board on \_\_\_\_\_ and will be in effect for five years from that date, or until amended.

## APPENDIX

### **Unit 19a, West Desert Mountain Ranges Subunit**

**Tooele, Utah, Juab and Millard counties** - Boundary begins at the Utah-Nevada state line and I-80 in Wendover; east on I-80 to the Dugway road at Rowley Junction; south on this road to the Pony Express Road; east on this road to SR-36; north on SR-36 to SR-73; east on SR-73 to I-15; south on I-15 to US-6 at Santiquin; southwest on US-6 to its junction with US-50 near Delta; west on US-50 & 6 to the Utah-Nevada state line; north along this state line to I-80 at Wendover.

This unit excludes the following limited entry unit.

**Tooele, Juab, and Millard counties** - Boundary begins at SR-36 and the Pony Express road; southeast on SR-36 to US-6; southwest on US-6 to SR-174 (i.e. the IPP road); northwest on SR-174 to the Dugway Valley road; north on this road to the Pony Express road; northeast on this road to SR-36. USGS 1:100,000 Maps: Lyndyll, Delta, Fish Springs, Rush Valley. Boundary questions? Call DWR Springville office, (801) 489-5678.

### **Unit 19b, West Desert/Vernon/ Subunit**

**Tooele, Juab, and Millard counties** - Boundary begins at SR-36 and the Pony Express road; southeast on SR-36 to US-6; southwest on US-6 to SR-174 (i.e. the IPP road); northwest on SR-174 to the Dugway Valley road; north on this road to the Pony Express road; northeast on this road to SR-36. USGS 1:100,000 Maps: Lyndyll, Delta, Fish Springs, Rush Valley. Boundary questions? Call DWR Springville office, (801) 489-5678.